Second Sunday of Advent, Year B

The Collect:

Rite I:
Merciful God, who sent thy messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Rite II:
Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:1-11

1 Comfort, O comfort my people,
    says your God.
2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
    and cry to her
that she has served her term,
    that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
    double for all her sins.

3 A voice cries out:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
    make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
4 Every valley shall be lifted up,
    and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
    and the rough places a plain.

5 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

6 A voice says, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass;
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers; the flower fades,
[[when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
8 The grass withers; the flower fades,]]
but the word of our God will stand forever.
9 Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"
10 See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him
and his recompense before him.
11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms
and carry them in his bosom
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalm: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

1 You have been gracious to your land, O LORD, *
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people *
and blotted out all their sins.
8 I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.

9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.
10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
12 The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.
13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

Epistle: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand
years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise,
as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to
come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the
heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be destroyed with fire,
and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of persons ought you
to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming
of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and destroyed and
the elements will melt with fire? 13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for
new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

14 Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him
at peace, without spot or blemish, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ.

2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way,
[3] the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight,' "

[4] so John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. [5] And the whole Judean region and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him and were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. [6] Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. [7] He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. [8] I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

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